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Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Abkhazia, Georgia

I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to Security Council resolution 1752 (2007) of 13 April 2007, by which the Security Council decided to extend the mandate of the United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia (UNOMIG) until 15 October 2007. It provides an update of the situation in Abkhazia, Georgia since my report of 3 April 2007 (S/2007/182).

2. My Special Representative, Jean Arnault, continued to lead the Mission. He was assisted by the Chief Military Observer, Major General Niaz Muhammad Khan Khattak (Pakistan). The strength of UNOMIG on 1 July 2007 stood at 135 military observers and 16 police officers (see annex).

II. Political process

3. During the reporting period, UNOMIG continued efforts to maintain peace and stability in the zone of conflict. It also sought to remove obstacles to the resumption of dialogue between the Georgian and Abkhaz sides in the expectation that cooperation on security, the return of internally displaced persons and refugees, economic rehabilitation and humanitarian issues would facilitate meaningful negotiations on a comprehensive political settlement of the conflict, taking into account the principles contained in the document entitled "Basic Principles for the Distribution of Competences between Tbilisi and Sukhumi", its transmittal letter (see S/2002/88, para. 3) and additional ideas by the sides.

4. Throughout the reporting period, my Special Representative maintained regular contact with both sides, as well as with the Group of Friends of the Secretary-General both in Tbilisi and in their capitals. In May and June, several meetings were held in Tbilisi and Moscow with senior representatives of the Group of Friends and the European Union Special Representative for the South Caucasus. The Mission facilitated several visits for representatives of the Group of Friends and officials of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) to the zone of conflict and Sukhumi.

5. In spite of the expectations raised by the high-level meeting of the Group of Friends chaired by the United Nations and held on 12 and 13 February at Geneva

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(see S/2007/182, paras. 5-7), dialogue between the sides remained suspended during the period under review. The Abkhaz side continued to link the resumption of dialogue, including on non-technical issues, to preconditions, such as the withdrawal of Georgian armed personnel and the Government of the Autonomous Republic of Abkhazia from the upper Kodori Valley, which was categorically ruled out by the Georgian side. It also linked the resumption of dialogue to the release of David Sigua, an ethnic Georgian working in the de facto administrative structures of the Gali district (see S/2007/182, para. 15), who had disappeared on 3 February 2007. The Government of Georgia has consistently denied any involvement in the disappearance. The sides also differed in their interpretations of Security Council resolution 1752 (2007), which the Georgian side welcomed as confirmation that it had met the Council's recommendations related to the Kodori Valley, while the Abkhaz side maintained that the Georgian side remained in breach of the Agreement on a Ceasefire and Separation of Forces signed in Moscow on 14 May 1994 (see S/1994/583) and related protocols.

6. Relations between the two sides worsened following what appear to have been informal discussions on the release of Mr. Sigua on the one hand, and the release of the three Georgian students arrested on 1 March as a result of the Shamgona incident (see S/2007/182, para. 14) on the other. On 3 May, the Abkhaz side released the three students. The Georgian side continued to deny any connection to the disappearance of Mr. Sigua and denied any involvement in discussions on the matter. This situation further undermined relations between the sides and overshadowed the release, on 23 April, by the Georgian side, of Pridon Chakaberia (see S/2007/182, para. 22). Against that background, even technical meetings between the two sides were not possible.

7. In May, the Government of Georgia outlined its overall approach to the settlement of its internal conflicts, which included direct dialogue between the parties to the conflict; involvement of impartial mediators; international policing; the safe and dignified return of internally displaced persons and refugees; and the revision of the legal framework for conflict resolution. The Abkhaz side continued to oppose the modification of existing formats.

8. Concerned by the deterioration of relations between the two sides and the possibility of outbreaks of violence, early in June, the Tbilisi-based Group of Friends met the two sides in Tbilisi and Sukhumi and urged them to put the process back on track. In the same spirit, and also concerned at the lack of follow-up to the previous Geneva meeting, senior representatives of the Group of Friends met in Bonn on 27 and 28 June under the chairmanship of the Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations. Representatives of the two sides, led by the State Minister for Conflict Resolution Issues, Merab Antadze, and the de facto Foreign Minister, Sergei Shamba, participated in the meeting, as did my Special Representative.

9. On that occasion, the Chairman, while acknowledging some progress in several areas, emphasized outstanding difficulties. He recalled that UNOMIG continued to assess the overall security situation as tense. He mentioned the need to ease tension in the Gali district and referred specifically to the possibility of incidents linked with the recent establishment of the patriotic youth camp in Ganmukhuri (see para. 16 below). He expressed the fear that, in the absence of dialogue, existing mistrust and suspicions would further deepen and the possibility of escalation would increase. The Chairman stressed that both sides had a primary

responsibility to refrain from any acts of violence or provocation. In stressing the need for a resumption of dialogue, he emphasized the role of security dialogue as part and parcel of the effectiveness of the peacekeeping arrangement. Finally, he expected the two sides to further discuss and implement the paper and the proposals for confidence-building measures presented by the Group of Friends in February. He also stressed the view of the United Nations that recent developments only confirmed that the creation of basic levels of trust between the sides and their respective communities remained a fundamental dimension of the settlement.

10. The Georgian side stressed its concern over what it described as a persistent lack of will of the Abkhaz side to engage in direct dialogue, and expressed its readiness to address some of the obstacles to its resumption. In particular, it confirmed its proposal to launch a Joint Fact-Finding Group investigation into the disappearance of Mr. Sigua. The Georgian side also confirmed its readiness to participate in the regular quadripartite meetings, which bring together the two parties, UNOMIG and the Collective Peacekeeping Forces of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), as soon as the terms of reference and rules of procedure prepared by UNOMIG were finalized. Acknowledging continuing issues involving the transit of military vehicles through the security zone, the Georgian side pledged to continue working with UNOMIG to achieve full and timely notification. It reaffirmed its commitment to the 600 threshold in the deployment of law enforcement personnel in the security zone. With regard to the situation in the upper Kodori Valley, the Georgian side stressed that, since deployment in July 2006, the presence of personnel from the Ministry of Internal Affairs there had decreased considerably, now offset by a significant number of local personnel. While stressing its compliance with the 1994 Moscow Agreement, the Georgian side confirmed its intention to align its deployment in the upper Kodori Valley with the policy implemented in other regions of Georgia, including a further increase in the representation of the local population in the police force. It indicated that the number of personnel from the Ministry of Internal Affairs deployed in the upper Kodori Valley could be reviewed in the light of the security situation, including the findings of the investigation into the attack of 11 March (see S/2007/182, para. 27) in the Kodori Valley. With regard to reports on the presence of unidentified armed people in the lower Kodori Valley (see para. 28 below), the Georgian side denied any presence of Georgian security forces in areas under Abkhaz control, called for a full investigation into the matter and expressed its concern about the threat that such a presence might pose to the upper Kodori Valley.

11. In relation to confidence-building measures, the Georgian side reaffirmed its readiness, previously expressed in February, to facilitate contacts between the Abkhaz side and the Abkhaz community in Turkey. It was also prepared to discuss the modalities for the establishment of maritime communications between Sukhumi and Trabzon, Turkey. Reiterating the critical importance of the return of internally displaced persons to Abkhazia, Georgia, the Georgian side urged the resumption of work by the Commission for the return of internally displaced persons and refugees, which was established under the 1994 Quadripartite Agreement on Voluntary Return of Refugees and Displaced Persons. It also offered its support for the work of the Commission on missing persons. It expressed its readiness to continue to cooperate with the Abkhaz side on combating swine fever. The Georgian side once again reiterated its readiness for a meeting between the highest leaders of both sides, without preconditions. Finally, the Georgian side suggested that monthly meetings

be held between the parties, the Group of Friends and the United Nations to monitor implementation.

12. The Abkhaz side stressed its concern over what it described as a continuing Georgian military build-up in and around the zone of conflict and the Kodori Valley. It expressed a particular concern over reports of alleged new Georgian checkpoints established in the lower Kodori Valley. In order to resolve security and other issues, the Abkhaz side stated its support for the resumption of the quadripartite meetings and its willingness to participate in a Joint Fact-Finding Group investigation into the disappearance of Mr. Sigua. It also reiterated its readiness to discuss ways and means to ensure law enforcement in the upper Kodori Valley through the involvement of the local population.

13. With regard to confidence-building measures, the Abkhaz side reiterated its interest in the intensification of contacts between the Abkhaz side and the Abkhaz community in Turkey, as proposed by the Georgian side in February. It also proposed the establishment of maritime communication between Sukhumi and Trabzon, and was ready to discuss ways and means to ensure transparency and accountability in relation to Customs control with the support of the international community. The Abkhaz side also expressed its readiness to cooperate in the area of missing persons, as proposed by the International Committee of the Red Cross, and to continue its cooperation in combating swine fever, in accordance with the mechanisms established in January 2006 in relation to the avian flu. The Abkhaz side reiterated that it was prepared to consider a meeting between the two sides at the leadership level provided that it was well prepared and resulted in concrete security or economic outcomes, such as a commitment to the non-use of force or to the lifting of the CIS economic restrictions. The Abkhaz side welcomed the continuation of informal dialogue involving civil society representatives. Finally, the Abkhaz side suggested that, with regard to those confidence-building measures, UNOMIG should pave the way for direct dialogue by developing proposals acceptable to both sides.

14. For their part, the Group of Friends stressed the priority that they attached to security and the preservation of peace. In that respect, they expressed their concerns about the reported movements of unidentified armed personnel in the lower Kodori Valley. They urged that the matter be investigated and resolved. They also reiterated their serious concern about the location of the patriotic youth camp in the vicinity of the ceasefire line, urged the sides to exercise maximum restraint and requested that the camp be relocated away from the security zone. They welcomed the agreement by the two parties to participate in the quadripartite meetings and noted their readiness to hold the first meeting in July 2007. They also welcomed the readiness of the sides to participate in a Joint Fact-Finding Group investigation into the Sigua case and proposed that it start as soon as possible. The Friends invited the sides to follow-up their commitment to several of the confidence-building measures endorsed by the Security Council, in particular the establishment of maritime communication between Sukhumi and Trabzon, Turkey, with appropriate Customs control. With regard to economic cooperation, the Friends welcomed the agreement of both sides to resume the work of the Steering Committee of the rehabilitation programme funded by the European Commission in the zone of conflict. They also encouraged the two sides to start cooperating on issues such as missing persons, and to continue cooperating in combating swine fever. They stressed the importance of holding a meeting at the leadership level. Finally, the Friends reiterated their

undertaking made in February to monitor closely the implementation of confidence-building measures and the assurances given by the parties during the meeting.

15. On 4 July, the second meeting of the Steering Committee of the rehabilitation programme in the zone of conflict, funded by the European Commission, was held in the UNOMIG offices in Zugdidi and was chaired by the Head of the Delegation of the European Commission to Georgia, Ambassador Per Eklund. UNOMIG and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), which are implementing partners of the rehabilitation programme, were represented by the Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General and the UNDP Deputy Resident Representative, respectively. The Georgian side was represented by the Deputy State Minister for Conflicts Resolution Issues, and the Abkhaz side by the de facto Deputy Foreign Minister. The participants considered reports on the implementation of the first phase of the programme and presented their views on a range of issues, including the ways and means to better coordinate the implementation of ongoing projects and those planned under the second phase of the programme. The participants also exchanged views on the kind of assistance that the European Commission could provide under the European Neighbourhood Policy Action Plan. In particular, they agreed to focus on confidence-building measures in the preparation of their project proposals. The participants agreed to hold a third meeting of the Steering Committee in Gali, in the third quarter of 2007.

III. Developments in the Mission's area of responsibility

Gali sector

16. The security situation in the Gali sector remained tense. UNOMIG maintained an increased rate of patrols, including through the periodic deployment of temporary forward patrol bases co-located with CIS peacekeeping force check-posts. The Abkhaz de facto militia continued to deploy additional posts throughout the Gali district, though personnel numbers remained below the limits specified in relevant agreements and protocols. Further deployments were observed following the opening, on 26 May, of a large Georgian patriot youth camp at Ganmukhuri, in close proximity to the ceasefire line on the Georgian-controlled northern side of the Inguri River. The CIS peacekeeping force deployed an additional checkpoint at Nakargali, opposite the Ganmukhuri camp, and increased its air patrols in the area. The Abkhaz side increased its coastal patrols in the area. UNOMIG followed up on Georgian reports that a Russian military base was being constructed near Primorsk town in the restricted weapons zone, but no evidence of such construction was observed.

17. Crime reports during the reporting period included two killings, seven shootings, nine robberies and three abductions. In April, the Abkhaz de facto authorities arrested five Georgian fishermen in two separate incidents in the coastal waters off the Gali and Ochamchira districts. The fishermen were subsequently released but their vessels were confiscated.

18. The United Nations police continued to liaise with the Abkhaz de facto militia in the Gali, Tkvarcheli and Ochamchira districts. It conducted eight training courses on crime scene management, evidence collection, interview techniques and police tactics, which were attended by 113 Abkhaz de facto law enforcement officers. From 23 to 27 April, the United Nations police also organized a specialized training

course for 22 Abkhaz forensic experts and distributed seven lots of forensic and tactical equipment.

19. The Human Rights Office in Abkhazia, Georgia, followed up on reports of robbery, abductions and cases of missing persons in the lower Gali district with both the affected families and the de facto law enforcement agencies. Two cases of abduction were resolved upon payment of ransom; some of the perpetrators were subsequently identified and held in custody pending trial. The Office followed up on reports of conscription practices. Despite the lack of complaints about the treatment of Georgians in the de facto armed forces, several features of the conscription practice such as overnight detention and harassment raise concern. The Office also received information and complaints of acts of intimidation by officials across the ceasefire line directed in particular at people suspected of cooperating with the de facto authorities in Gali.

20. The issue of the language of instruction remained of concern to the local population and those willing to return. While the language of instruction and of the school curriculum is still Georgian in the lower Gali district schools, Abkhaz de facto officials made statements to the effect that Abkhaz textbooks on history, geography and national culture in Russian would be introduced to the school curriculum in September 2007. The Georgian side protested against those statements.

Zugdidi sector

21. The situation in the Zugdidi sector remained calm. Following the reopening of the Khida Pass in May, UNOMIG observed increased Georgian ground and air movement to and from the upper Kodori Valley. The temporary UNOMIG observation post on the road to the upper Kodori Valley in the Zugdidi security zone (see S/2007/182, para. 20) reported 4 cases of isolated military vehicle movement and 55 cases of movement by vehicles of the Georgian Ministry of Internal Affairs, as well as 43 cases of overflights by the Ministry of Internal Affairs, including 25 aircraft and 6 helicopter flights without prior notification and 12 helicopter flights with prior notification. The Georgian side subsequently stated that all the overflights were for rotating and resupplying personnel deployed in the upper Kodori Valley. During the reporting period, UNOMIG issued seven reports of violation of the 1994 Moscow Agreement in the Zugdidi district, including six for the presence and transit of military vehicles and personnel in the Zugdidi security zone and one for the denial of access to a UNOMIG patrol at the Ganmukhuri patriot youth camp during its construction on 24 April.

22. On 12 April, a Georgian Coast Guard exercise was held within the coastal boundary of the security zone. The exercise, conducted by two vessels without prior notification, included live machine gun fire from one of the vessels.

23. On 10 May, an incident involving a CIS peacekeeping force patrol and personnel of the Georgian Ministry of Internal Affairs occurred when the patrol attempted to enter the Ganmukhuri patriot youth camp in the security zone. A joint investigation into the incident has been ordered by the UNOMIG Chief Military Observer. The Joint Fact-Finding Group, however, has not yet been convened owing to the reluctance of the Abkhaz side to participate.

24. The rotation of the southern operations group battalion of the CIS peacekeeping force, deployed on the Georgian-controlled side of the ceasefire line, was conducted from 26 May to 2 June. UNOMIG monitored the rotation closely, and did not observe any significant changes to the size or equipment of the battalion.

25. The crime situation in Zugdidi district remained stable. Five homicides, seven robberies and three abductions were reported. United Nations police conducted 20 training courses in crime scene management, use of force, weapons handling, self-defence, and crime scene investigation. The courses were attended by a total of 187 law enforcement officers. From 18 to 22 April, experts from the Police College of the Public Service Academy of Estonia visited Zugdidi to conduct a post-course assessment of Georgian law enforcement officers who had undergone training in the College during the period 2005-2007. In order to assess better the performance of Georgian law enforcement officers and provide them with appropriate advice, United Nations police conducted 32 joint patrols with local law enforcement officers and made 65 visits to monitor local police facilities in the security zone. Implementation of the community policing and crime prevention programmes continued, including a number of courses on drug-abuse prevention and traffic security awareness among schoolchildren of the Samegrelo-Zemo Svaneti region.

Kodori Valley

26. The Joint Fact-Finding Group into the incident of 11 March in the upper Kodori Valley conducted two additional patrols during the reporting period: one to the Tkvarcheli region on 11 May, and the other to the lower and upper Kodori Valley on 14 and 15 May. After four working sessions and two extensive ground patrols, the Group completed its interim report on 2 April. During the same month, it approached the Russian Federation, through UNOMIG, to request assistance in a number of aspects of the investigation. In June, the Russian Federation provided relevant experts to assist the Group, but was unable to provide additional information sought by it. The Group held another four sessions and conducted two more patrols before it adopted a supplementary report on 13 June. After the Group had compiled and discussed all available data, evidence and information, its report, signed by all Group members, was posted on the UNOMIG website.

27. A joint patrol with the CIS peacekeeping force was conducted from 4 to 6 June. The patrol found the situation in the upper Kodori Valley essentially unchanged compared to its previous patrol conducted from 5 to 7 March (see S/2007/182, para. 26). During the patrol, UNOMIG made preparation for the reactivation of the Kodori team base in Adjara, scheduled for July. The Georgian side has begun construction of a new road through the Khida Pass, which is expected to be completed later in 2007 and will provide year-round access to the upper Kodori Valley. One report of a violation was issued to the Georgian side for the presence of a military truck in the upper Kodori Valley on 5 June.

28. On 25 June, the Abkhaz side informed UNOMIG about the alleged presence of two Georgian observation posts in the lower Kodori Valley and requested the Mission to assess the situation. On 26 June, UNOMIG and the CIS peacekeeping Force sent a joint patrol to the area designated by the Abkhaz side. The patrol confirmed and photographed using special optical instruments, the presence of seven unidentified uniformed persons, one of whom was armed at the time. The

Georgian side denied having any presence in Abkhaz-controlled areas (see para. 10 above) and expressed its own concern about the reports. On 30 June, the Mission launched a special patrol to reoccupy its temporary observation post near the so-called Broken Bridge in order to monitor the new positions or react immediately to any new development in the lower Kodori Valley. The patrol was initially forced to return, however, as a large landslide had blocked the route; on 4 July, however, the patrol was deployed and has since confirmed the continued presence of the unidentified group on the heights north-west of the Broken Bridge. The CIS peacekeeping force reinforced its two checkposts in the lower Kodori Valley, including with a mine-clearance team, and increased the number of foot patrols in the area. In addition, the surrounding heights were being occupied during daylight for enhanced observation, and air patrols were made early in July. The Abkhaz side also reinforced its checkpost and increased foot patrols in the area.

Mission-wide developments

29. Weekly quadripartite meetings remained suspended (see S/2007/15, para. 26). It is hoped that the meetings will resume in July (see para. 14 above). The Joint Fact-Finding Group has 13 open cases, including 4 awaiting completion. Except for the investigation into the incident of 11 March in the upper Kodori Valley, however, work on all other cases remains suspended.

IV. Cooperation with the Collective Peacekeeping Forces of the Commonwealth of Independent States

30. UNOMIG and the CIS peacekeeping force maintained close cooperation in fulfilling their respective mandates. In addition to its joint patrols with the Mission in both the lower and upper Kodori Valley, the CIS peacekeeping force is providing escort assistance to the inspections by the Joint Fact-Finding Group and logistic assistance to the Mission's temporary forward patrol bases in the Gali and Zugdidi security zones. The CIS peacekeeping force also established an additional checkpoint at Nakargali, in the lower Gali district, and in the vicinity of the Ganmukhuri patriot youth camp, and enhanced its ground and air patrolling in the Gali district.

V. Human rights issues

31. During the reporting period, the United Nations Human Rights Office in Abkhazia, Georgia, continued to conduct regular monitoring visits to detention facilities, including frequent visits to the detention centre in Gali town, to provide legal advisory services to the local population and to monitor court trials, including for the resolution of a number of cases in which the people in custody have been released. In particular, the Office closely followed the detention of the three Georgian students arrested on 1 March and provided them with legal assistance. It also continued to draw the attention of the de facto authorities to the need to discontinue the discriminatory practice of declining as inadmissible property rights claims filed by owners who had fled since 1992 as a result of forced displacement (see S/2007/182, para. 34). On a related issue, the Mission called the attention of the Abkhaz de facto Parliament to the fact that draft legislation attempting to restrict the

scope and rights of internally displaced persons would be in breach of international law and would undermine the fundamental right of return.

32. In April, the Office commenced implementation, in cooperation with local non-governmental organizations, of four projects funded by the Government of Switzerland within the framework of a human rights programme. The projects include a trust telephone line for male and female detainees; free legal and psychological aid for vulnerable groups; awareness-raising on human rights issues based on the collection of testimonies from repressed persons; and the dissemination of knowledge on domestic violence. In April, the Office, in cooperation with OSCE, also launched a project, implemented by a local non-governmental organization, on the promotion of human rights and civic activism among school students through a mini-grants competition across Abkhazia, Georgia. It also continued support, also through a local non-governmental organization, for the Human Rights Centre at Sukhumi University and to liaise with the human rights centre established by local non-governmental organizations in Gali town. Projects in the area of human rights education and training, implemented by local non-governmental organizations within the framework of the "Assisting Communities Together" project funded by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, were completed during the reporting period.

VI. Humanitarian and rehabilitation activities

33. The Mission continued implementation of the rehabilitation programme funded by the European Commission in the Gali, Tkvarcheli, Ochamchira and Zugdidi districts, and in particular the rehabilitation of three hospitals in the zone of conflict. Rehabilitation of the Zugdidi tuberculosis hospital was completed in May. The Government of Georgia approved the rehabilitation of the sewage treatment system in Zugdidi, which was included in phase I of the rehabilitation programme. Work is due to commence in the near future. In June, UNOMIG concluded a contract for the supply and installation of an X-ray machine at Ochamchira hospital, to be funded by the Government of Germany.

34. United Nations agencies and international non-governmental organizations continued to assist vulnerable groups affected by the conflict on the Abkhaz-controlled side of the ceasefire line. UNDP continued its integrated recovery programme, encompassing agricultural income-generation assistance, water rehabilitation projects and capacity-building in the Gali, Tkvarcheli and Ochamchira districts. It also maintained the Sukhumi information centre for the international and local aid community working in Abkhazia, Georgia. In mid-April, the World Food Programme started providing on-site feeding for 10,000 school children in 32 vulnerable schools and take-home dry food rations for the most at risk of them. In line with its exit strategy, on-site feeding was phased out in June 2007. A new round of the food-for-work programme also provided food to more than 13,000 beneficiaries in the Gali, Ochamchira and Tkvarcheli districts, in collaboration with World Vision International.

35. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), together with the Danish Refugee Council, the Norwegian Refugee Council, and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, continued providing assistance under its strategy to promote confidence-building measures for displaced and war-

affected persons, aimed at building confidence at the grass-roots level through assistance based on self-help and community mobilization. UNHCR also implemented, through the international non-governmental organization Première Urgence, a home garden project, which benefits 150 vulnerable people, and also initiated, together with World Vision International, a social support centre project in three locations in the Gali and Tkvarcheli districts, to address specific age and gender issues.

36. Première Urgence commenced a rehabilitation programme targeting 85 individual houses, 9 apartment blocks and 2 community infrastructure projects, funded by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation. It also continued its programme funded by the European Commission Humanitarian Aid Office to improve the livelihoods and food security of 550 farmers and small business owners in the Sukhumi, Gulripshi, Tkvarcheli, Gali and Ochamchira districts.

VII. Support issues

37. During the reporting period, UNOMIG continued to conduct infrastructure repairs of key roads used by its military observers for patrolling the conflict zone.

38. The Mission continued its HIV/AIDS prevention and awareness campaign, now included in induction training for all personnel and weekly medical training for military personnel. In compliance with the strategic priorities for 2007/08 of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations in July 2007, UNOMIG participated in the HIV/AIDS strategic priorities workshop, specifically organized for UNOMIG personnel in all forms of the Mission's offices. Since my previous report, 34 new military and 7 civilian personnel (36 male and 5 female) have been briefed on gender equality in peacekeeping.

VIII. Observations

39. I hope that the outcome of the meeting of the Group of Friends, chaired by the United Nations, on 27 and 28 June, in Bonn, will lead to tangible improvements on the ground, particularly with regard to security, economic cooperation and humanitarian issues. Both sides must now take concrete steps to implement the understandings reached at the meeting. The holding of the second session of the Steering Committee of the programme of rehabilitation funded by the European Commission in the zone of conflict, which had not met since 2005, will be a first positive step in that direction. Ensuring a swift follow-up to the agreement reached in Bonn on the resumption of the quadripartite meetings on security and the Joint Fact-Finding Group investigation on the disappearance of Mr. Sigua will be a key factor. UNOMIG circulated to the participants in the meetings the draft terms of reference that take into account the concerns of sides. I hope they will be accepted promptly so as to allow the meetings to resume without delay. The Mission is also trying to ensure that it has the investigative resources required to ensure its effective participation in the investigation of the Joint Fact-Finding Group on the disappearance of Mr. Sigua. More generally, UNOMIG intends to do its utmost to facilitate the implementation of all the commitments made in Bonn, with the support of the Group of Friends, including the confidence-building measures endorsed by the Security Council in its resolution 1752 (2007).

40. In parallel to the resumption of contacts and the implementation of the agreed confidence-building measures, the sides need to redouble their efforts to avoid action that could lead to a renewal of hostilities. While the situation around the patriotic youth camp in Ganmukhuri has remained calm since its opening on 26 May, UNOMIG has observed increased activity and posturing on both sides of the ceasefire line in the vicinity of the camp, including off the coast. In order to reduce the possibility of incidents, the United Nations joins the Group of Friends in calling on the Government of Georgia to move the camp away from the security zone. Cultural activities, which are the focus of the youth camp, come under the same recommendation made in my previous report with regard to civil and political activities, namely that they should be carried out in a manner that does not allow for misunderstanding, miscalculation and subsequent violence. Potentially critical situations caused by the deployment of armed personnel, such as the one observed in late June in the vicinity of the Broken Bridge, should be avoided. I urge the two sides to stay away from one another. A separation of opposing forces is the primary and often the most effective guarantee of the preservation of peace.

41. The work of the Joint Fact-Finding Group in relation to the incident of 11 March in the upper Kodori Valley has been finalized with recommendations and published. In my previous report, I suggested that the two parties and the international community should approach the situation in the upper Kodori Valley also in terms of prevention, in particular by remedying the serious limitations of UNOMIG observation in that area. In consultation with Headquarters, the Mission has proposed four measures to that effect: reactivating the UNOMIG patrol base in Adjara, in the upper Kodori Valley; extending the area of UNOMIG patrols to the areas surrounding the upper Kodori Valley; equipping UNOMIG with unmanned aerial vehicles; and, subject to further feasibility studies, the deployment of an artillery radar to be operated by UNOMIG, in the Kodori Valley. Such measures would undoubtedly increase the Mission's operational capabilities, including its monitoring and observing capacities in the sensitive areas of operation and, based on lessons learned from the experience of the above-mentioned Joint Fact-Finding Group investigation, they would also considerably increase the effectiveness of any future investigation. As mentioned above, the reactivation of the Adjara patrol base in upper Kodori Valley is already in progress. Discussions will continue on the other proposed measures with both sides. In particular, they should focus on the use of unmanned aerial vehicles as the only way for UNOMIG to fulfil its obligations in areas where the risks inherent in air patrols by helicopter are simply too high and ground patrolling is impossible because of inaccessibility of terrain or other threats. The developing situation on the heights around the Broken Bridge is another case in point.

42. In concluding, I wish to express my gratitude to the Group of Friends, which, during the period under review, once again provided invaluable support to my efforts in relation to the Georgian-Abkhaz conflict and the activities of UNOMIG. I also wish to express my appreciation for the assistance received from international organizations and Member States. Finally, I wish thank my Special Representative, Jean Arnault, the Chief Military Observer, Major General Niaz Muhammad Khan Khattak, and the men and women of UNOMIG for their dedication to the search for a fair and lasting solution to this unresolved conflict in a complex and tense environment.

Annex

Countries providing military observers and civilian police personnel (as at 1 July 2007)

Country	*Military observers*
Albania	3
Austria	2
Bangladesh	8
Croatia	2
Czech Republic	6
Denmark	5
Egypt	8
France	3
Germany	12
Greece	5
Hungary	7
Indonesia	4
Jordan	7
Lithuania	2
Moldova	1
Nepal	1
Pakistan	11[a]
Poland	6
Republic of Korea	7
Romania	2
Russian Federation	4
Sweden	3
Switzerland	4
Turkey	5
Ukraine	5
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	5
United States of America	2
Uruguay	3
Yemen	1
Total	**134**

[a] Including the Chief Military Observer.

Country	*Civilian police personnel*
Czech Republic	2
Germany	4
Ghana	1
Philippines	2
Poland	2
Russian Federation	2
Sweden	1
Switzerland	2
Ukraine	2[a]
Total	**18**

[a] Including the Senior Police Adviser.

Map No. 3837 Rev. 54 UNITED NATIONS
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Department of Field Support
Cartographic Section